



Children's Interpretation of Additive Particles

Inna Llanos, Hisao Kurokami, Valentine Hacquard, Daniel Goodhue, Jeffrey Lidz

Department of Linguistics



Introduction

Children learning German, Dutch or Japanese have trouble with additive particles



1) Winnie-the-Pooh also brought a [blanket]_F

≈Winnie brought a blanket and at least one other thing

Adults:



Children:



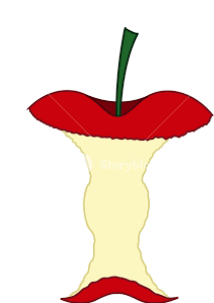
Goals:

- To find out if English learning children have the same problem
- What is the source of the problem:
 - lack of understanding of additive particles or
 - poor choice of method?

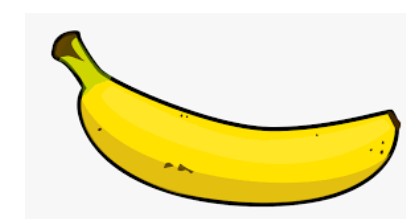
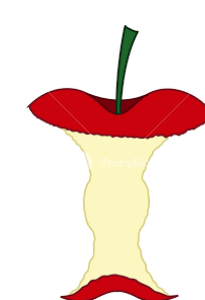
Linguistic Background

- Focus introduces contextually salient alternatives**

2) John ate an apple.

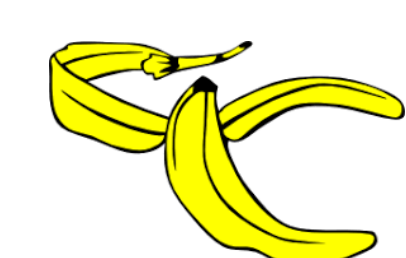
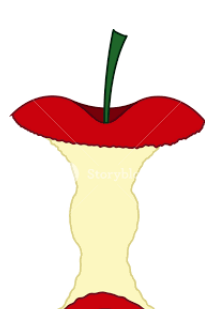


3) John ate an APPLE (as one of the alternations).



- Additive particles (example: *also*) interact with focus to introduce new meaning to a sentence**

4) John also ate the APPLE (in addition to something else).

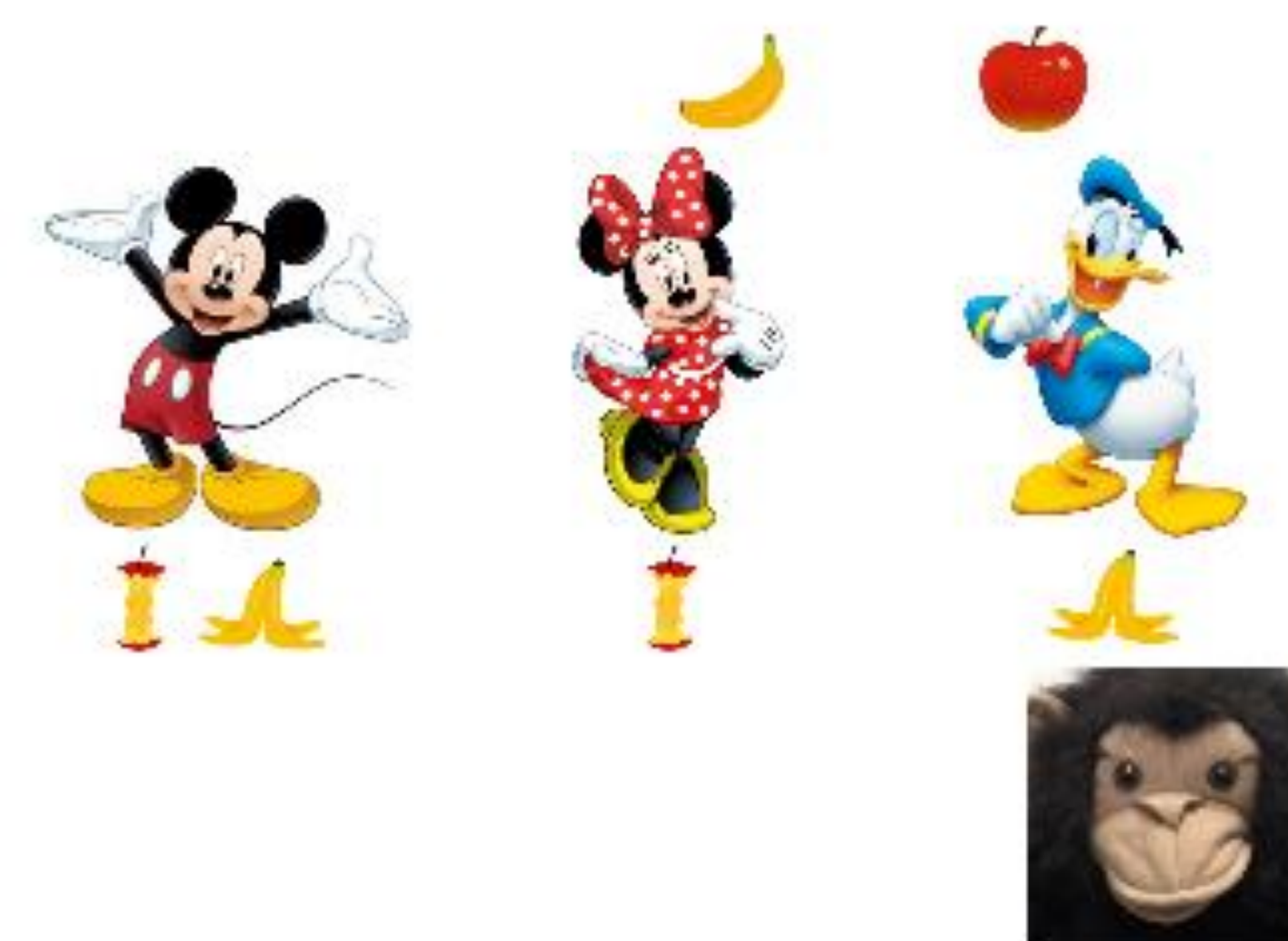


- Presuppositions survive under embedding and truth conditions do not.
“Piglet also brought a [blanket]_F.” vs. “Did Piglet also bring a [blanket]_F?”

Method: Question-After-Story task

What is it?

- Assess children's (age range: 4-6) interpretation of a sentence through asking questions about a story
- We use this method to not make children feel like they are being tested
- A puppet is asking the child a question
- One group of children hears “also” and the other doesn't
- 4 practice, 4 control and 4 test trials



In this story Mickey, Minnie and Donald are going to eat fruit for breakfast. Mickey eats 2 fruits, Minnie eat one and Donald eats only 1 too

Okay Charlie, who ate the most fruit in this story?

Hmm, Donald didn't eat an apple, but Mickey and Minnie did. **Now who (also) ate a banana?**



Researcher

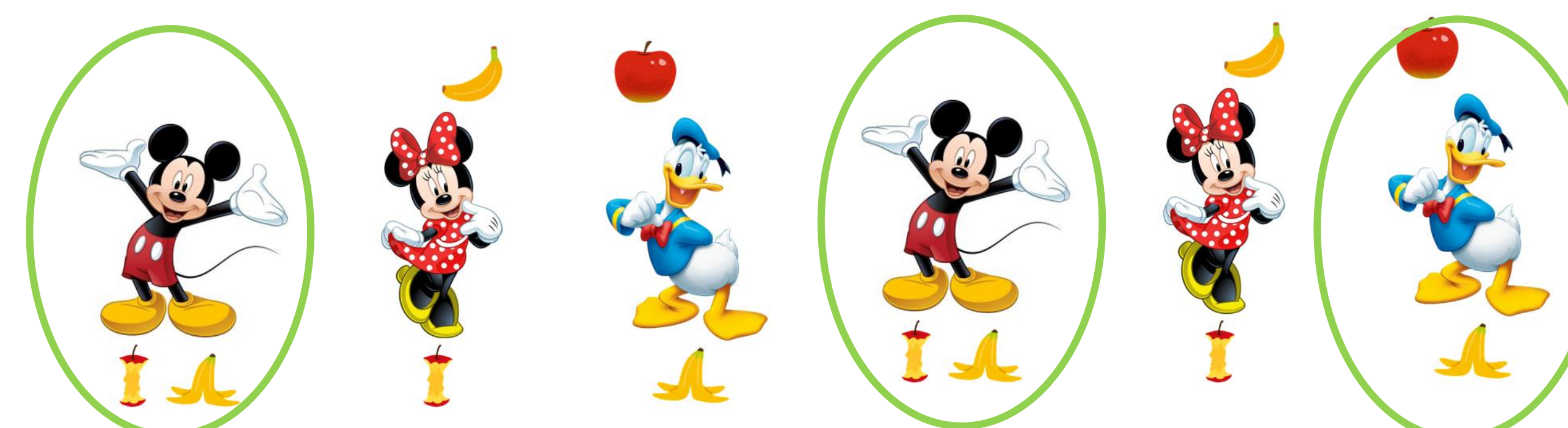


Charlie

Charlie doesn't remember everything in the story, so he then asks the children a question

Expected adult-like answer for “Also” Condition:

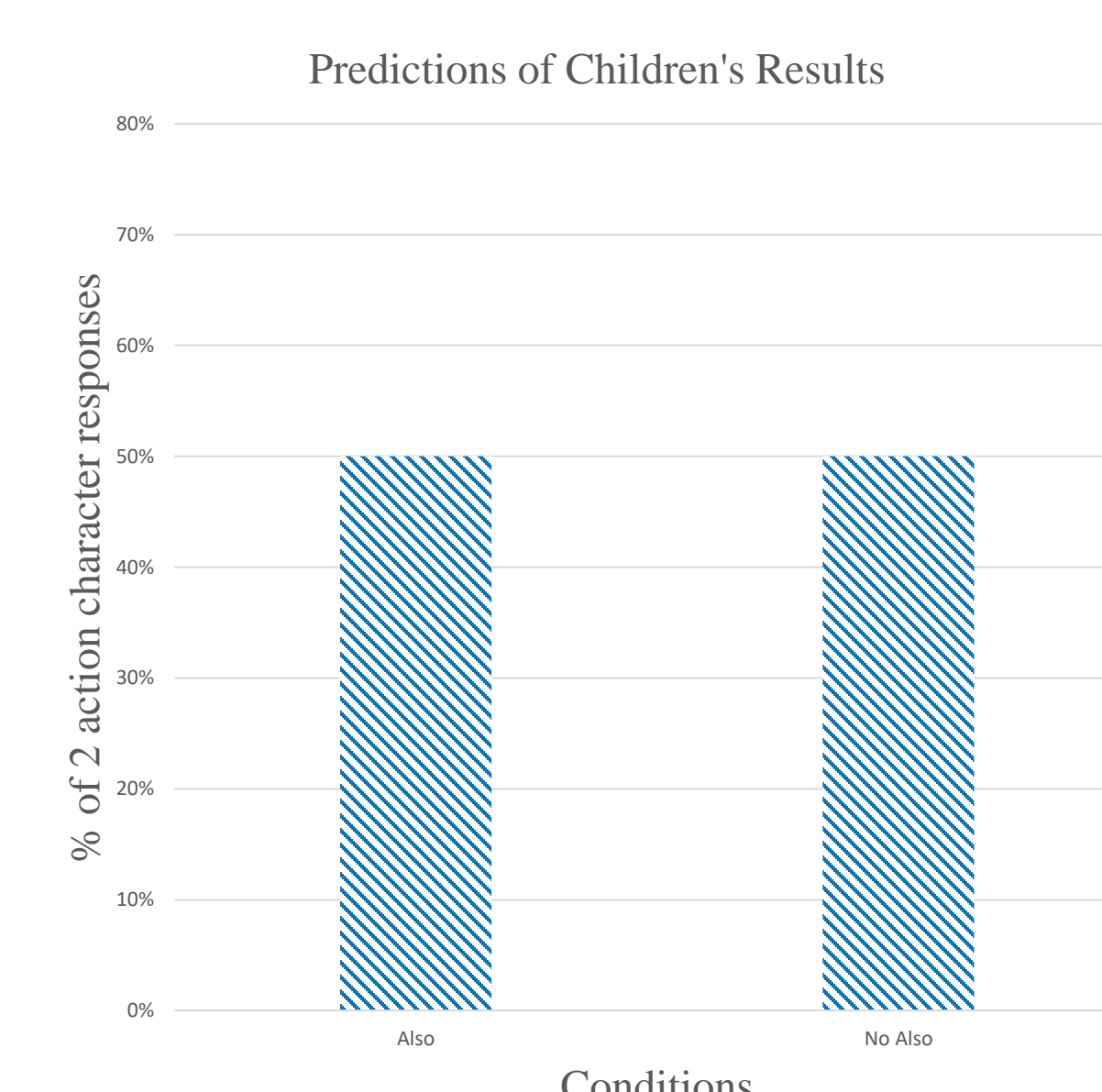
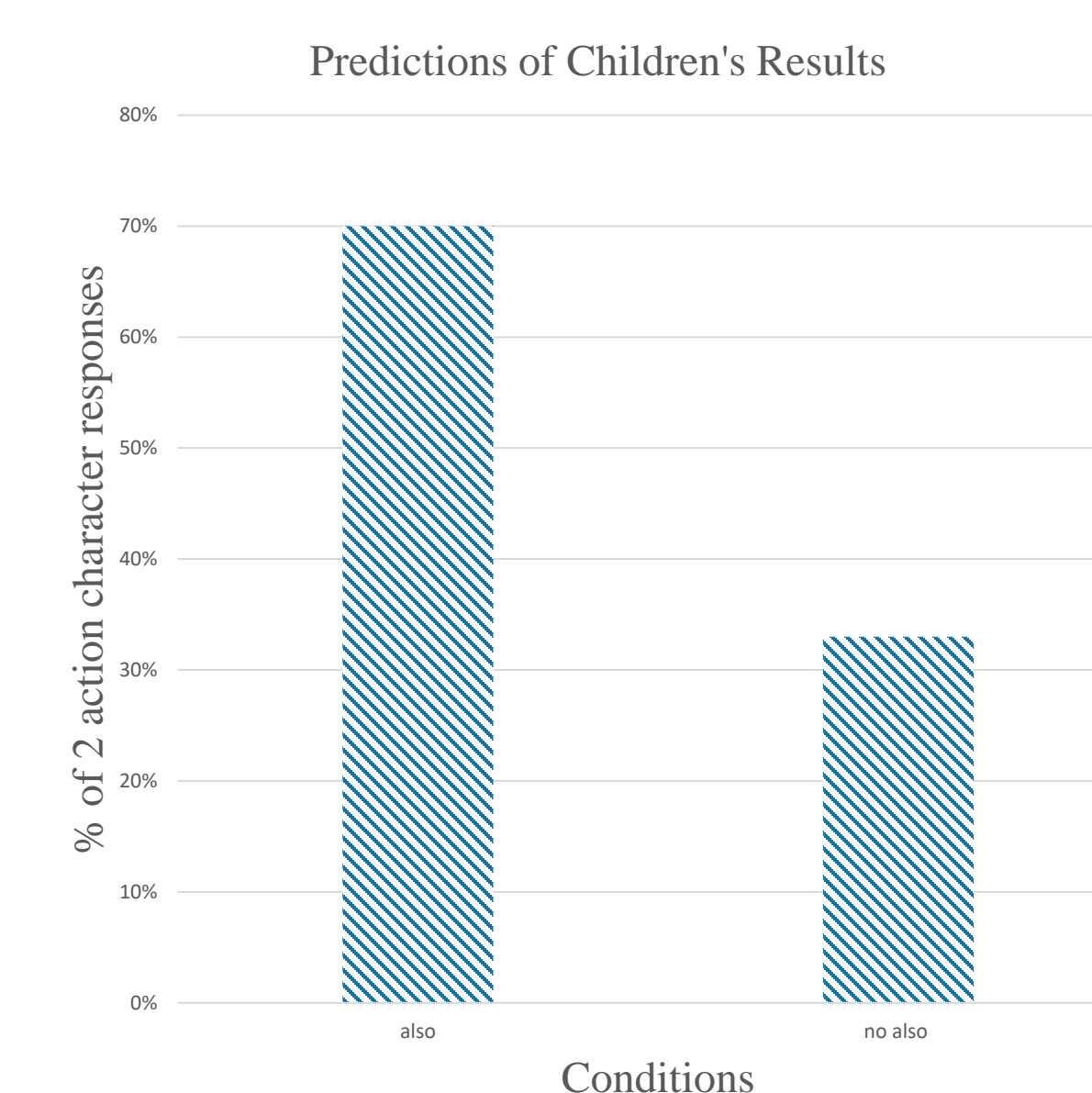
Expected adult-like answer for “No Also” Condition:



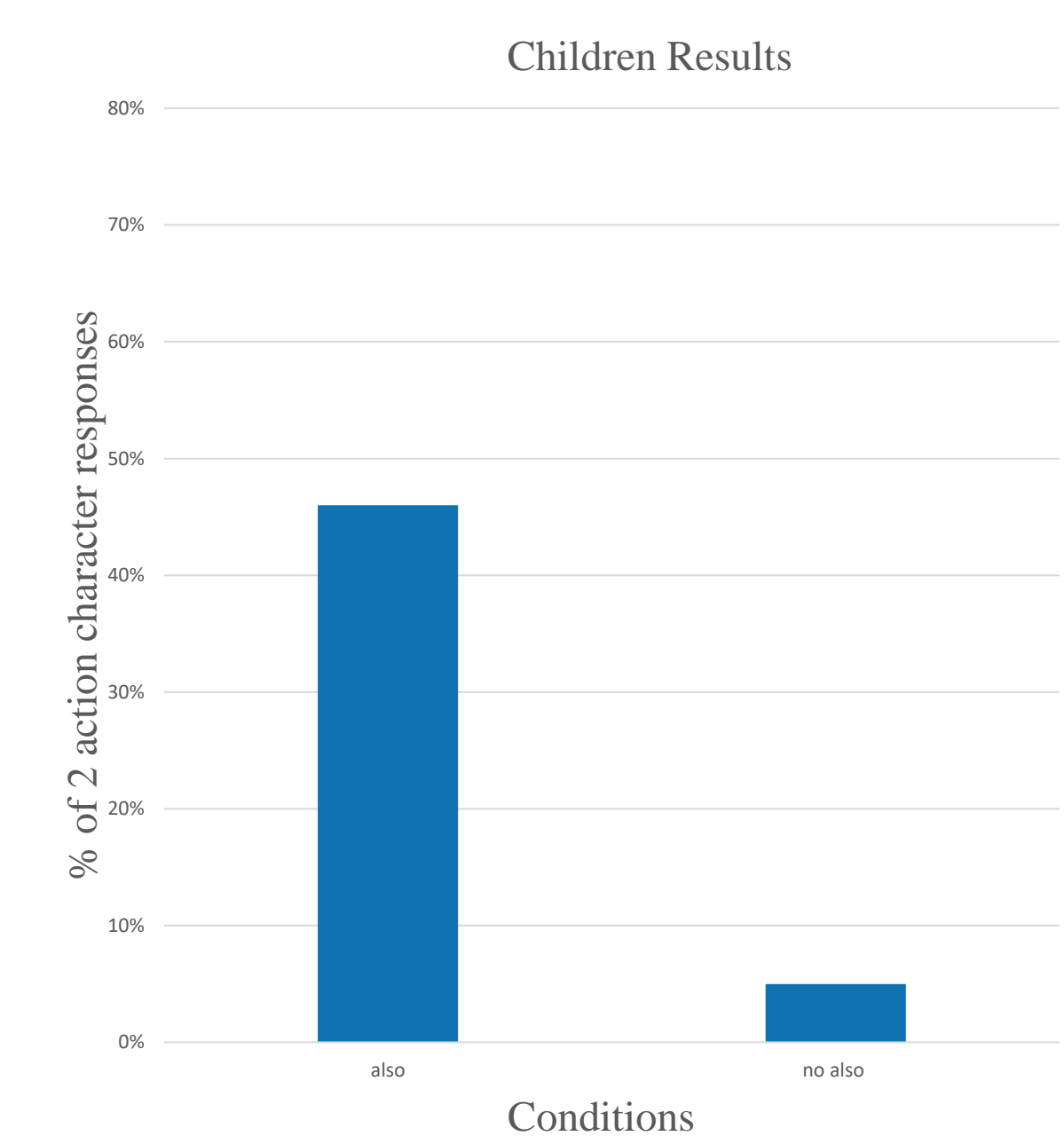
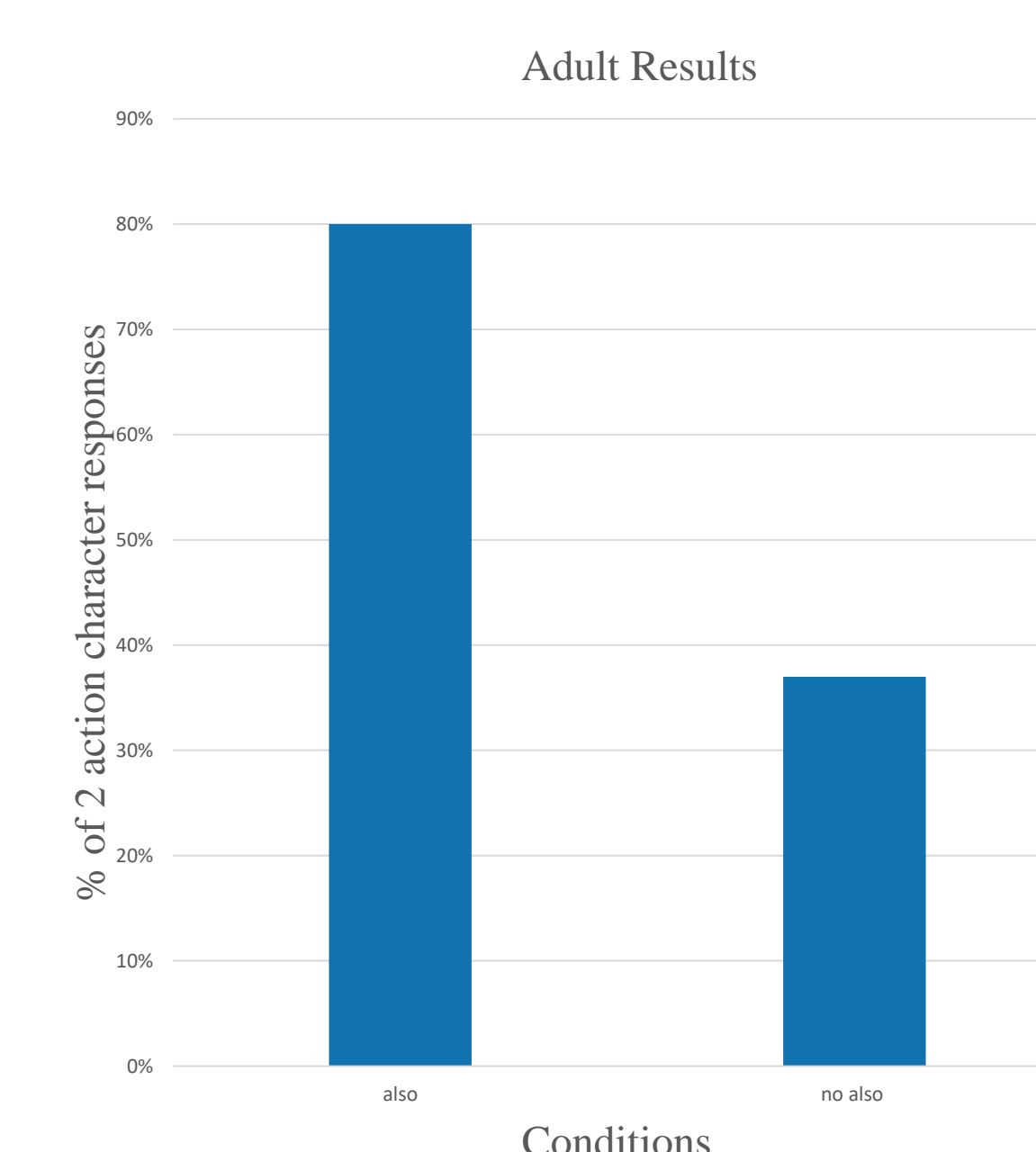
Predictions

Hypothesis A: If English-learning children understand the meaning of “also”, then the responses should be similar to adult results

Hypothesis B: English-learning children would not understand the meaning of “also” (just like children that acquire other languages)



Results



- There is a similar pattern between the adult and children responses
- The 2-action character response appears more often when the “also” question is asked
- Although, children still gave Mickey as an answer a lot less than adults did in the “also” condition